

## CLAIMS

1           1.       A method of determining the status of an answered telephone during the course of  
2 an outbound telephone call comprising:

3           A.       placing, with an automated calling system, a telephone call to a location having a  
4 telephone number at which a target person is listed;

5           B.       upon said telephone call being answered, initiating a prerecorded greeting which  
6 asks for the target person;

7           C.       receiving a spoken response from an answering person;

8           D.       performing a speech recognition analysis on said spoken response to determine a  
9 status of said spoken response; and

10          E.       if said speech recognition analysis determines that said answering person is said  
11 target person, initiating a speech recognition application with said target person.

1           2.       The method of claim 1 wherein, in step D, if said speech recognition analysis  
2 determines that said spoken response indicates that said answering person is not said target  
3 person, a next step comprises initiating a prerecorded query asking for said target person.

1           3.       The method of claim 2 wherein, upon said target person answering said telephone  
2 call, said method further comprises initiating a speech recognition application with said target  
3 person.

1           4.       The method of claim 1 wherein, in step D, if said speech recognition analysis  
2 determines that said spoken response indicates that said target person is not present at said

3 location, a next step comprises initiating a prerecorded query asking to leave a message for said  
4 target person.

1 5. The method of claim 4 further comprising a step of providing a prerecorded  
2 message to said answering person.

1 6. The method of claim 1 wherein, in step D, if said speech recognition analysis  
2 determines that said spoken response is a hold request, a next step comprises entering a wait state  
3 to wait for said target person to provide a spoken response to said telephone call.

1 7. The method of claim 6 wherein, upon said target person providing a spoken  
2 response to said telephone call, said method further comprises initiating a speech recognition  
3 application with said target person.

1 8. The method of claim 1 wherein, in step D, if said speech recognition analysis  
2 determines that said spoken response is a request for the identity of the entity responsible for the  
3 calling system, the method further comprises initiating a prerecorded response indicating the  
4 identity of the calling party, repeating said prerecorded greeting which asks for the target person,  
5 and repeating step C through step E.

1 9. The method of claim 1 wherein, in step D, if said speech recognition analysis  
2 determines that said spoken response indicates that said telephone number is not the correct  
3 number for the target person, the method further comprises initiating a prerecorded apology  
4 message and terminating said telephone call.

1           10.     The method of claim 1 wherein, in step D, if said speech recognition analysis  
2 cannot determine a status of said spoken response, said method further comprises repeating said  
3 prerecorded greeting which asks for the target person, and repeating step C through step E.

1           11.     A system for determining the status of an answered telephone during the course of  
2 an outbound telephone call comprising:

3           an automated telephone calling device for placing a telephone call to a location having a  
4 telephone number at which a target person is listed; and

5           a speech recognition device which, upon said telephone call being answered, initiates a  
6 prerecorded greeting which asks for the target person, receives a spoken response from an  
7 answering person and performs a speech recognition analysis on said spoken response to  
8 determine a status of said spoken response;

9           wherein, if said speech recognition device determines that said answering person is said  
10 target person, said speech recognition device initiates a speech recognition application with said  
11 target person.

1           12.     The system of claim 11 wherein, if said speech recognition device determines that  
2 said spoken response indicates that said answering person is not said target person, said speech  
3 recognition system instructs said automated telephone calling device to initiate a prerecorded  
4 query asking for said target person.

1           13.     The system of claim 12 wherein, upon said target person answering said  
2 telephone call, said speech recognition system initiates a speech recognition application with said  
3 target person.

1           14.     The system of claim 11 wherein, if said speech recognition device determines  
2 that said spoken response indicates that said target person is not present at said location, said  
3 speech recognition system instructs said automated telephone calling device to initiate a  
4 prerecorded query asking to leave a message for said target person.

1           15.     The system of claim 14 wherein said automated telephone calling device provides  
2 a prerecorded message to said answering person.

1           16.     The system of claim 11 wherein, if said speech recognition device determines that  
2 said spoken response is a hold request, said speech recognition enters a wait state to wait for said  
3 target person to provide a spoken response to said telephone call.

1           17.     The system of claim 16 wherein, when said speech recognition device determines  
2 that said target person has provided a spoken response to said telephone call, said speech  
3 recognition device initiates a speech recognition application with said target person.

1           18.     The system of claim 11 wherein, if said speech recognition device determines that  
2 said spoken response is a request for the identity of the entity responsible for the automated  
3 calling device, the speech recognition system instructs said automated telephone calling device  
4 to initiate a prerecorded response indicating the identity of the entity and to repeat said  
5 prerecorded greeting which asks for the target person;

6           wherein, upon receiving a spoken response from the answering person, said speech  
7 recognition device performs a speech recognition analysis on said spoken response to determine  
8 the status of said spoken response.

1           19.     The method of claim 11 wherein, if said speech recognition device determines  
2     that said spoken response indicates that said telephone number is not the correct number for the  
3     target person, said speech recognition system instructs said automated telephone calling device  
4     to initiate a prerecorded apology message and to terminate said telephone call.

1           20.     The method of claim 11 wherein, if said speech recognition device cannot  
2     determine a status of said spoken response, said speech recognition system instructs said  
3     automated telephone calling device to repeat said prerecorded greeting which asks for the target  
4     person;

5                 wherein, upon receiving a spoken response from the answering person, said speech  
6     recognition device performs a speech recognition analysis on said spoken response to determine  
7     the status of said spoken response.

1           21.     A method for determining the status of an answered telephone during the course  
2     of an outbound telephone call comprising:

3           A.     placing, with an automated calling system, a telephone call to a location having a  
4     telephone number at which a target person is listed;

5           B.     upon said telephone call being answered, initiating a prerecorded greeting which  
6     asks for the target person;

7           C.     receiving a spoken response from an answering person;

8           D.     performing a speech recognition analysis on said spoken response to determine a  
9     status of said spoken response; and

10          E.     providing at least one of the following responses based on said speech recognition  
11     analysis:

12                   a. if said speech recognition analysis determines that said answering person is  
13 said target person, initiating a speech recognition application with said target person;

14                   b. if said speech recognition analysis determines that said spoken response  
15 indicates that said answering person is not said target person, initiating a prerecorded query  
16 asking for said target person, wherein, upon said target person answering said telephone call,  
17 said method further comprises initiating a speech recognition application with said target person;

18                   c. if said speech recognition analysis determines that said spoken response  
19 indicates that said target person is not present at said location, initiating a prerecorded query  
20 asking to leave a message for said target person;

21                   d. if said speech recognition analysis determines that said spoken response is a  
22 hold request, entering a wait state to wait for said target person to provide a spoken response to  
23 said telephone call, wherein, upon said target person providing a spoken response to said  
24 telephone call, said method further comprises initiating a speech recognition application with  
25 said target person;

26                   e. if said speech recognition analysis determines that said spoken response is a  
27 request for the identity of the entity responsible for the calling system, initiating a prerecorded  
28 response indicating the identity of the calling party, repeating said prerecorded greeting which  
29 asks for the target person, and repeating step C through step E;

30                   f. if said speech recognition analysis determines that said spoken response  
31 indicates that said telephone number is not the correct number for the target person, initiating a  
32 prerecorded apology message and terminating said telephone call; and

33 g. if said speech recognition analysis cannot determine a status of said spoken  
34 response, repeating said prerecorded greeting which asks for the target person, and repeating step  
35 C through step E.

1 22. A method of detecting an answering machine comprising:

2 A. placing, with an automated calling system, a telephone call to a location having a  
3 telephone number at which a target person is listed;

4 B. upon said telephone call being answered, waiting for a predetermined time period  
5 for a spoken response;

6 C. upon receiving said spoken response, playing a prerecorded greeting prompt  
7 which asks for said target person;

8 D. while playing said prerecorded greeting prompt, attempting to detect a further  
9 spoken response in excess of a predetermined time parameter;

10 E. in the absence of detecting said further spoken response during the playing of said  
11 prerecorded greeting prompt, initiating a query application;

12 F. upon detecting said further spoken response during the playing of said  
13 prerecorded greeting prompt, terminating the playing of said prerecorded prompt; and

14 G. indicating that an answering machine has been detected.

1 23. The method of claim 22 further comprising the step of attempting to detect a beep  
2 tone during the playing of said prerecorded greeting prompt and, upon the detection of a beep  
3 tone, interrupting the prerecorded greeting prompt and playing a prerecorded answering machine  
4 message prompt.

